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T H E
SOLDIER'S TALE,

EXTRACTED FROM THE
VILLAGE ASSOCIATION:

With two or three Words of advice,

By **O L D H U B E R T,**

THE SECOND EDITION.

————— *One Murder makes a Villain,
Millions a Hero. Princes are privileg'd
To kill, and numbers sanctify the crime,
Ah! why will kings forget that they are men?
And men that they are brethren? Why delight
In Human sacrifice. Why burst the ties
Of nature that should knit their souls together
In one soft bond of amity and love
They yet still breathe destruction, still go on.
Inhumanly ingenious, to find out
New pains for life, new terrors for the grave.
Artificers of death! Still Monarchs dream
Of universal empire growing up
From universal ruin. Blast the design
Great God of Hosts, nor let thy creatures fall
Unpitied victims at Ambitions shrine.*

Dr. PORTEUS, Bishop of London.

————— *Why these scenes that wound the feeling mind?
This sport of Death——this cockpit of mankind?
Why sobs the Widow in perpetual pain?
Why cries the Orphan,——“Oh my fathers slain”
Why hangs the Sire, his paralytic head,
And nods with manly grief——“My son is dead”?
Why drops the tears from off the Sisters cheek,
And sweetly tells the sorrows she would speak?
Or why in pensive steps does honest John,
To all the neighbours tell, “Poor Master's gone”?
Oh could I paint the passion I can feel,
Or point a horror that would wound like steel,
To the unfeeling unrelenting mind
I'd send a torture and relieve Mankind.*

THOMAS PAINE;

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SOLDIER'S TALE.

JUST as business was commencing, a neighbouring Farmer made his appearance, conducting an aged, maimed SOLDIER; "Here, said he, my friends accept a new and worthy member."—An appearance of shyness and reserve was instantly discoverable in the countenance of several of the members; this being perceived by *Hubert* he immediately seized the Soldier by the hand, and turning to the Farmer who was evidently hurt by the reception his friend had met with from the Company, "Brother," said he "in the name of our friends here. I thank you for thus introducing to us a new acquaintance, and one whom I doubt not, we shall have reason to esteem as a friend—Excuse the shyness you observed in your neighbours at your entrance, and consider that when men first cast their eyes on a red coat they cannot avoid associating with it the ideas of rapine and murder; such having been the purposes for which the Tyrants of the world have hitherto employed this class of our *Fellow citizens*."

Hubert now rested his hand on the shoulder of the Soldier, whilst the veteran, proud of his new title raised himself as erect as if drawn up in the line, "My friends," continued *Hubert*, "be not, like silly dogs, more offended with the stone than with the hand that throwed it. Be not offended with a soldier, for those acts, which being commanded by his superiors to perform, his life would be the price of his disobedience. Regard not *Common Soldiers* as they
are

are humiliatingly termed, with an eye of suspicion; on the contrary, wherever you meet with them, pity and succour them; load them with kindneſſes; and treat them as your Friends and Brethren, Then, in the moment of neceſſity and alarm will you be ſure to find them the Proteſtors of their Fellow-citizens and the Guardians of their Country." *Hubert* ſtopped ---the Soldier looked round him, and perceiving that the countenances of every one now bore evident marks of friendſhip and reconciliation, he thus addreſſed them.

"My Fellow Country-men, you have now before you, ſuing to be received into this Society of Peace, one who in a thoughtleſs moment, devoted himſelf to the horrid purpoſes of war, but who has repented of his folly, not to ſay his crime, every ſucceeding moment of his life. I was bred up by a tender and careful parent, who early inſtilled into my mind the pure and benevolent maxims of chriſtianity, an affection for every human being, and a diſpoſition to ſympathize with my fellow creatures in every calamity I beheld them ſuffer. Scarcely had I attained the age of manhood, when I was entrapped by the curſed wily artifices of a recruiting Serjeant: by his diabolical cunning I was induced to quit the comforts and pleaſures of a rural life, and tie myſelf down to ſpend the reſt of my Days in penury and wretchedneſs. Good Heavens! what ſcenes of carnage have paſt before theſe eyes! never will my memory be freed from the cries and agonies of thouſands I have ſeen fall the victims of ambition and tyranny. Yes, my friends, thouſands have I ſeen dead on a field of battle—to gratify a filly and contemptible, but merciless Tyrant. Some of them too, might perhaps have fallen by theſe guilty hands—Painful reflection! But (and the tears which ſtreamed down his cheeks ſhewed that his tongue was
ſpeaking

speaking the language of his heart)—“But,” said he, “I hope when Mercy weighs my crimes, those actions which my busy, timid, self-accusing conscience is momentarily bringing before my mind, will not be thrown in the scale against me—No they were not acts of the will, But of submission to my superiors,” *They*, said he with firmness, “must look to it, for the crimes were theirs. One circumstance, my friends, I thank my God, I have to congratulate myself upon: never have I yet lifted up a hand against a FELLOW CITIZEN, having always resolved, when that was required of me to resign my own life rather than submit. No, while others have gloried in the title of the King’s Soldiers, I have considered his Majesty, God bless him, as the Steward of the people, and myself as the SOLDIER OF THE PEOPLE.

The countenance of all were now animated with affection and respect for *thier* Soldier: every one was desirous to take him by the hand, and to accommodate him with a convenient seat; when the Curate, who was one of the assembly, put an end to the amicable contest by placing the Soldier betwixt himself and *Hubert*.

Our warrior, almost overpowered with gratitude at the excess of attention which was shewn to him, thanked his new associates, and thus proceeded. ‘Disabled at last, by the loss of a limb, I was dismissed the service. Worn out with age and misery, I was travelling through the next village towards the town in which I was born; but overcome with fatigue and want, I ventured to rest myself on the steps at the church door, when a surly, imperious fellow of a Beadle, gathered a mob around me by his noisy abuse, and insolently accused me with having committed a felony. Fired with rage at such an accusation, I requested

ed the surrounding crowd to inform me where the next Justice of the Peace resided; that I might answer the accusation, and assert my innocence in a legal manner. My enquiry was unnecessary, for the unfeeling Villain availing himself of my weakness and my inability to defend myself, seized me by the collar and dragged me, with a mob at my heels, before his Worship; who soon convinced me of my truly forlorn and miserable state. Sinking with hunger, weariness, disappointment and pain, I thought my wretchedness was complete, but —No,— the measure of my calamities was not yet full. I had still to learn that I was deserted by Equity and persecuted by Law: for the Justice taking down a large book, read to me an act, which he said was passed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by which it was ordered that idle soldiers and mariners wandering about the realm, are made guilty of Felony without benefit of the clergy; in other words—*are deserving of instant death*. The Justice therefore perpared to make out my commitment. And is this, said I the reward of forty long years of hard and painful service.—I should have proceeded, but this worthy gentleman,” pointing to the farmer, “requested and obtained my discharge, by promising to take me into his service.

* * *

—The evening now came on apace. The bright burning streaks which accompanied the setting sun had disappeared; only a few scattered purple clouds yet remained, which were quickly losing their faint tints, and promised, with the rest of the vast expanse, to be soon overwhelmed in darkness.

Hubert,

Hubert therefore rose and leaning on his staff, whilst with one hand he smoothed from his eyes his silver locks, which the evening breeze had disturbed; he thus dismissed his companions.

“Look round my friends, see how bounteously all Nature is stored with gifts for the acceptance of men, Be ever grateful to the allwise dispenser of these inestimable blessings; but more particular receive with thankfulness the lessons of love and peace, which through divine goodness have been revealed to you. By these you learn that through love for one-another you may obtain unity of spirit, and preserve the bond of peace. By these you are taught to—‘Do unto others as you would they should do unto you,’

“Be in friendship, therefore, with all men of every kingdom and nation, for, as the proverb says (and ‘A proverb is the offspring of truth and experience’) ‘Human blood is all of one colour.’ I pray you tell me, Does not the same God reign, and the same Sun shine over all?—Is not he as much my kinsman who was born under the north pole, as he that was born at the next door? therefore, as the saying is, ‘Let us kill the devil with grief, by joining hands all round the world,

“Then shall we no more wade in the blood of our brethren, to gratify the ambition and satisfy the blood thirstiness of those whom silly custom has titled great men. It is well said that,—‘Where the horse of the Conqueror treads the corn dates not peep;’ but—The world without peace is the soldier’s harvest! Alas! my friends! ‘When the trumpet sounds, Death prepares for a feast;’ and much is meant by the old saying, ‘When war begins, the gates of hell fly open;’ since war not only occasions bloodshed rapine and murder—but ‘war makes thieves and
peace

peace hangs them; 'for to day, no act can be too rapacious or cruel for a soldier to commit, but to--morrow, should his hunger overcome his prudence, he is tried like a criminal, and perhaps flead alive,"

"Why cannot we my friends guard our own rights and properties? Why be at the expence of keeping so many thousand soldiers, year after year, and all the year round too; For, as my poor Grandfather was used to say,--Soldiers in peace are like chimneys in Summer. But this, my friends is a point, not for us to determine,"

"Take my advice, however, and though the world be too narrow for two fools a quarrelling, 'When others go to camps, you stay in the corn-fields; 'since, 'Though he may snatch a slice of honour that goes to the fight, Discretion stays away; 'for of all the armour I ever heard of, 'The best shield against sword or ball is an inch or two of **OUT-OF-REACH.**' Not that I would wish any man to desert who has been fairly enlisted, or to fear the loss of a few drops of blood, in the cause of liberty and justice. I only wish you to consider, 'There is less fun in battle than at a harvest home."

"Never be caught by tinsel frippery, nor lured by a scarlet coat and a cockade. But when the Serjeant rattles his gold in your face—Think of the value of what you are going to sell, and consider well, the price you are about to receive for it. Oh, but you may say, it is not money tempts me but, 'tis — Honour. Honour, silly man! when did you hear of a common soldier reaping any honour, his General runs away with that; for, It is the common soldier's blood makes the General a great man.' Little claim, my friends, can he have upon Heaven who undertakes,
for

for hire, to embrace his hands in the blood of his fellow creatures: you all know where it is said Blessed is the Peacemaker, but where is it so spoken of the Conqueror; Honest Trenchard used to say, "Alexander who robbed kingdoms and States, was a greater felon than the tyrant whom he put to death, though no one was strong enough to inflict the same punishment upon him. It is no more just to rob with regiments or squadrons, than by single-men or single-ships.

Must little villians then submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy the world in state?

Shall a poor pick-pocket be hanged for filching away a little loose money; and wholesale thieves who rob nations of all that they have, be esteemed and honoured? Shall a roguery be sanctified by the greatness of it; and impunity be purchased, by deserving the highest punishment?"

"May we not say of the high and mighty Potentates of this world, Gods vicegerents upon earth, that

"Their feet are swift to shed blood,
"Destruction and Misery are in their ways
"And the way of Peace have they not known

"But for our part, let us all deeply engrave on our hearts this delightful sentence,

"Oh! beautiful Peace
"Sweet union of a State! what else dost thou
"Gives safety, strength and glory to a people?"

F I N I S.

